

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

BEFORE THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

Application of Dominion Energy South
Carolina, Inc. for Adjustment of Rates
and Charges.

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DOCKET NO. 2020-125-E

Settlement Testimony of

EMMA MYERS

on behalf of
AARP South Carolina

July 8, 2021

I. Introduction

Q. Please state your name and business address.

A. My name is Emma McGraw Myers. My home address is 1900 McAllister Street, Columbia, SC 29204.

Q. What is your occupation?

A. I am the Chief Operating Officer of Advanced Care Management, LLC which employs case managers statewide to conduct assessments, develop service plans and provide care coordination to the elderly and disabled on Medicaid. I am also President and CEO of EM Consultants—a Midlands-based small business specializing in fundraising, training and capacity-building for corporate, faith-based and grassroots organizations. I also teach as an Adjunct Professor at the USC College of Social Work.

Q. What is your role on behalf for AARP?

A. I have been State President of AARP South Carolina since 2018, and in that role, I work to improve the lives of those 50+ individuals that we serve by advocating on issues related to financial security, government accountability, utility reform, senior hunger, and family caregiving. AARP currently has over 600,000 members in the state

1 Q. What is the purpose of your testimony in this case?

2 A. I will provide AARP's perspective on the Comprehensive Settlement Agreement
3 ("Settlement") that was filed by the parties in this case on July 2, 2021, and
4 recommend that the Public Service Commission adopt the settlement.

5 **II. The Settlement is reasonable and serves the public interest**

6 Q. Why did AARP get involved in this Dominion electric rate case?

7 A. AARP was alarmed when Dominion Energy South Carolina ("Dominion") proposed
8 a large increase in electric rates in this docket, back in May of 2020, during the
9 beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of AARP's members live in the
10 territory served by Dominion. Some live on low or fixed incomes, struggle to make
11 ends meet, and could have been severely impacted by the significant electric rate
12 increase proposed. AARP was concerned about how the utility's request, if
13 granted, could impact those customers who are aged 50 and over. People aged
14 50 and over are impacted most directly by variations in energy prices. These
15 consumers also devote a higher percentage of their total spending than do other
16 age groups towards residential energy costs. Many older consumers also have
17 special needs and safety concerns about their access to electric service. These
18 are some of the considerations that led AARP to seek intervention in this rate case.

19 Q. Does AARP support the Settlement?

1 A. Yes. During the previous six months, AARP lawyers and experts worked with
2 Dominion and the other parties to develop the proposed settlement, and the
3 organization is a signatory to that document, which was filed on July 2, 2021. This
4 proposed agreement would be a just and reasonable way to resolve this rate case.
5 AARP believes that the Settlement has many positive features from a consumer
6 perspective. Moreover, the Settlement would serve the public interest in ways that
7 would not be possible absent a settlement.

8 Q. What are some of the features of the Settlement that are positive for consumers?

9 A. The Settlement includes several features that serve the interests of residential
10 consumers, including the following:

- 11 1. The overall rate increase for residential electric customers would be only
12 \$1.81 per month (approximately 1.5% bill increase) for a household with
13 typical usage (1,000 Kwh/month). This compares to the utility's original
14 proposed increase of \$9.68 per month. The settled upon electric rate
15 increase is about one-fifth as high as originally requested.
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- 17 2. The Settlement freezes these new base rates for nearly 2.5 years (until
18 January 1, 2024).
- 19 3. The Settlement provides that the fixed part of a residential electric bill will
20 only increase 50 cents, from \$9.00 to \$9.50 per month. AARP is pleased
21 that this fixed customer charge would be kept under \$10.00, since it is an

1 unavoidable fee and cannot be a reduced through energy conservation.
2 AARP advocates for reasonable customer charges that make controlling
3 your energy bill easier. We have fought against increasing such charges
4 around the country. Moreover, AARP has heard from its members a strong
5 preference for the bulk of any rate increase be applied to the usage part of
6 their electric bill (over which they have some control).

7 4. Dominion is also providing up to \$30 million from shareholder funds to assist
8 vulnerable and economically troubled customer, at no cost to ratepayers.
9 This will help those who have been affected by the pandemic and address
10 critical upgrades for home weatherization.

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12 5. The Settlement also provides a stakeholder process to explore some
13 solutions to the serious problem of affordability that many individuals and
14 families face with their utility bills. Within 90 days after an order from the
15 Commission approving the Settlement, a stakeholder group, including the
16 parties this case would meet to come up with an electricity affordability
17 program for Dominion's low-income customers. The electricity affordability
18 program may provide for: (1) an affordable payment program that provides
19 a discount to eligible customers on their monthly bills, or caps their monthly
20 bills based on income; (2) an arrearage crediting or arrearage management
21 program. AARP is excited about this opportunity to fully participate in

1 examining the best practices of other utilities around the country and is
2 hopeful that we can reach some consensus about some low-income
3 programs that work for some of South Carolina's most vulnerable citizens.

4
5 Q. Does this conclude your testimony?

6 A. Yes it does.